An excellent sermon was preached by the Rev. Canon Harvey previous to the dinner; and it was announced that the Duke of Beaufort had accepted the office of president for the ensuing year.

ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM.

Doubtful as I am whether you will allow the remarks I am about to make to appear in The Builder, I nevertheless send them. I cannot agree with you in thinking—as you appear to do—that "such men" as Sir R. Smirke, Mr. Barry, and Mr. Blore, are not to be spoken of unreservedly as regards their professional doings. On the contrary, I am of opinion that "such men" can best of all bear to hear the voice of honest criticism. If those who have been signally favoured by opportunities, and who have been employed on works of especial mark, cannot bear to have their works fairly submitted to critical examination, who can? They are, or ought to be, fully prepared for criticism, as what they must expect; and those alone have reason to deprecate the exercise of it who are conscious that their works will not endure its scrutiny.* For Sir Robert Smirke, indeed, there is this excuse—that in *his time*—namely, a quarter of a century ago, when he commenced operations at the British Museum—he could not have the wholesome fear of criticism before his eyes, because nothing deserving the name of architectural criticism then existed. There was then no vehicle for it—not a single architectural journal—but all was then a dead calm, as far as criticism is concerned, because nearly all were then in a dead sleep. For rousing us out of such a state of torpid indifference, we have to thank the late Mr. Loudon, who did much to popularise architectural criticism, not merely by his *Magazine*—the first periodical of its kind—but also by other publications. His policy—and most excellent and liberal it is—was to promote discussion,—to allow both sides to be heard, and even his own particular opinions to be freely called in question by any one who thought proper to do so; he being aware that it is only by the collision of opinions that prejudices can be removed, imperfect notions corrected, and erroneous ones exploded.

In the paper on "Architectural Criticism," in your last number, it is very justly said,—"Good criticism is a means by which the taste of masses may be greatly improved;" and not that of the "masses" only, but of the profession also. It could be wished, however, that the writer had expressly defined what "good criticism" is, and what is to be understood by it, instead of contenting himself with doing so only negatively, by giving us an instance of what he calls "negative criticism," which does not deserve to be called criticism at all, but should be left to *Punch*, and to those who, for lack of criticism, indulge in such small-witted facetiousness as is that of comparing spires to extinguishers, torza fountains to dumb-waiters, and window pediments to cocked-hats.† What I myself understand by "negative criticism" is that which, whether it be unfavourable, or, as frequently happens, quite the reverse, amounts to nothing more than the bare expression of opinion, without any attempt at fair and rational argument in support of it. It is not enough that, either way, the *opinion* itself be perfectly valid and just,—it does not become criticism unless it pronounce its judgment after an impartial estimate.

The absence of thoughtful, intelligent criticism operates disadvantageously in more ways than one. One great source of the interest attending architecture is cut off; getting no more than summary verdicts as to the merits or defects of the buildings that happen to be spoken of, the public may, indeed, admire or condemn just as they are so directed, yet remain just as uninstructed as before. Another evil is, that unless criticism be freely exercised professional men feel themselves, on the one hand, secure from open reproach for their faults; and on the other, little encouraged to exert themselves to the best of their ability. He who can set at nought idle and ignorant censure is also most likely to reject with scorn that sort of hackneyed praise which betrays itself to be either mere complimentary notice or indiscriminating adulation—hyperbolic in its language, perhaps, even to fulsomeness, but cold in feeling, and totally devoid of all heartiness.

It is, moreover, owing to the lack of a sufficiency of sound architectural criticism, and the consequent ignorance that prevails generally as to architecture itself, that many who are more or less unqualified to do so, venture to put forth off-hand opinions and crude remarks as criticism, they knowing that they may do so without the slightest fear of being contradicted or gainsaid. We certainly do frequently find the most one-sided—if not actually absurd—observations made, yet suffered to pass unrebuked, consequently, to all appearance acquiesced in, which would not be the case were criticism to be properly exercised. *Exempli gratiâ*: When Mr. Fergusson calls the new building at Buckingham Palace "hideously ugly," he quite overshoots the mark, and does not bring against it those real and valid objections which he easily might have done. Had the same design been executed as a façade for a range of houses any where in Belgravia, it might then have been called handsome—certainly would have been of superior quality to any of the architectural doings in that quarter; whereas, as the principal or public façade of a royal palace, it is so totally destitute of all those qualities which should stamp one, as to be, when its purpose is considered, most unsatisfactory, undignified, commonplace, and dowdy; and surely a considerable difference there is between being dowdy and "hideously ugly."

Arti Fidelis.

* Our correspondent misunderstands the remark,—or appears to do so. Our objection was not to criticism, but abuse.—Ed.

† It is due to the author of the paper in question to say, that only part of it was printed in The Builder.

THE DRAINAGE PLAN.

Allow me to correct Dr. Buckland's statement that "the London clay glanced off at the north-east corner of Saint Paul's," by ascertained facts.

Section at Black Swan-alley in Saint Paul's churchyard:—

	Ft.	In.
Made ground	11	6
Yellow clay or loam	4	6
Sand and gravel	18	6
Blue clay cut into	0	6

The gravel and sand was completely full of water. It had no tendency to run, for sharp sand, when water-laid, does not run. The whole of this water was pumped out by a steam-engine, and wells drained on the north side of Saint Paul's churchyard, in Saint Martin's-le-Grand, and in Newgate market, yet no building was in the least injured, simply from this circumstance, that sand containing water is as compact as it can possibly be, the water only fills the interstices, and its removal does not affect the solidity of the stratum.

Section at 24 feet from the south end of Princes-street, Bank:—

	Ft.	In.
Rubble and brickwork	10	0
Black soil (bog)	8	0
Yellow loam	2	0
Gravel	8	6
Blue clay cut into	4	0

at 48 feet further north, and for more than 60 feet still further:—

	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.
Rubbish	11	0		
Black bog earth of the ancient Walbrook	22	0	to 22	6

Cut into, and the blue clay just touched.

At 28 feet south of the London Dock House:—

	Ft.	In.
Rubbish	12	0
Loam	11	0
Gravel	14	4
Blue clay cut into	4	0

The blue clay underlies Moorgate-street, and has been cut into 5 feet 6 inches in depth, and in King William-street it has been cut into to a depth of 10 feet.

In Fenchurch-street the gravel has been cut into; in Aldgate High-street the loam has been cut into, and sand reached, and it is all but an established certainty, that beneath the London loam or gravel there is blue clay.

These I know to be facts, therefore I assume that the doctor has not spoken of his own knowledge, and venture to impugn so great an authority, merely from a desire that any project for getting rid of the foul pollution of the Thames should not be injured by unsupported assertion.

It is very doubtful if Philips's proposition can be carried out, but out of it something practicable may grow. Z. Z.

Mr. Bardwell has forwarded a communication on the subject of a plan laid by him before the commissioners at their first sittings. The writer says,—It was simply three intercepting sewers, at a depth of one or more feet below the lowest existing sewer. The first embraced nearly all the sewers in the old Westminster commission, and commenced at Charing Cross, running down Whitehall, Parliament-street, Millbank, Lupus-street, Chelsea Hospital Gardens, Cheyne-row, and emptying itself into reservoirs near the Kensington Canal. The second commenced at Northumberland-street, running beneath Hungerford-market, the Adelphi and Somerset House, through the Temple Gardens to Earl-street, along Thames-street and the Lower Ditch to East Smithfield, High-street, Shadwell, and along the banks of the Bromley Canal to Bromley Common. The third, the Surrey division. Its sewer commenced at the Effra, ran along Vauxhall-row Princes-street, Palace New-road, York road, Stamford street, Bankside, Tooley-street, Jamaica-row, to the reservoirs near the King's-road, Bermondsey.

From the depôts the sewage would be sent in pipes for irrigation at the proper seasons, and at other times the solids would be separated from the fluid by electric or chymical agents.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

The chief stone of Romford New Church was laid on 26th ult. The old foundations have been used in front, but the walls are carried out at the back 10 feet further than the limits of the old site. The church is to be in the Decorated style, the walls faced with Kentish ragstone, with dressings of Bath stone, and will contain 1,110 persons. The length of the interior is 113 feet; the width 54 feet; the height to the roof, which is an open one, 54 feet; the tower will be 66 feet high, and the spire from the ground 140 feet. The total cost will be 5,850*l*. Mr. Johnson is the architect, Mr. Kelk the builder, and Mr. Gibbons the clerk of the works. A view of the church has been published.——From recent reports it appears that that great bore the Northam Artesian well, near Southampton, has now been bored to 353 feet in depth. The progress has been impeded by a stone 22 inches thick, and the supply of water had decreased through the decay of the rods.——In a recent lodgement of tenders for repair of conduits belonging to the Southampton Water Works Company, it was found that "Mr. Howell's tender was 82*l*. 10s., while that of Mr. Metcher was only 39*l*.; the others varying from 61*l*. 16s. to 79*l*. 17s." Mr. Metcher's tender was accepted. It appeared, says a Hampshire cotemporary, that the miscellaneous repairs had amounted to about 75*l*. a-year.——A Bristol lady has bequeathed 4,000*l*. to found a school of arts in that city.——Kemerton Church, says the *Bristol Journal*, is again in course of restoration. The north aisle has now been taken down, and the whole interior of the building, with its Norman columns, exposed to view. The Norman arcade is, it is said, to be removed.——All Hallows-on-the-Walls, Exeter, has recently had stained glass inserted in the south window of the chancel.——Abberley Church is to be rebuilt and enlarged, Mr. J. Moilliet having got designs, and offered to supply whatever may be deficient in the requisite sum (2,500*l*.), to be raised by subscription, and the proprietress of Abberley-hall, the mother of the same gentleman, supplying the stone.——From the Liverpool Dock Surveyor's report it appears, that the remainder of the north docks are in a forward state, and that 232,374*l*. odds have been expended during the past twelve months on the new works, besides 20,610*l*. for dock repairs.——The parish church of Huddersfield has been generally repaired, and the interior newly painted in oak, &c., varnished, and emblazoned with heraldic crests in white and gold.——A column is to be erected on a height near

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